

# Environmental Reference Group

## Meeting Minutes

Absolutely Positively  
**Wellington City Council**  
Me Heke Kī Pōneke

**Details:** Date: Monday, 15 February 2021  
Time: 5:02pm – 6:53pm  
Venue: Ngake (16.09), Level 16, Tahiwī 113 The Terrace / Zoom  
Chair: Lynn Cadenhead

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**Members present:** Steven Almond George Hobson  
Mike Britton (via audiovisual link) Chris Watson  
Lynn Cadenhead Eleanor West  
Arron Cox

**Councillors present:** Cr Tamatha Paul Cr Laurie Foon (alternate) (via audiovisual link)

**Staff:** Mike Mendonça, Head of Resilience Moana Mackey, Chief Advisor to CIO and CPO (via audiovisual link)  
Tom Williams, Chief Infrastructure Officer Hedi Mueller, Democracy Advisor

**Public:**

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Topic	Description	Start time
1.	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b> Apologies were received for absence from Isla Day, Claire Stringer, Michelle Rush and Sally Faisandier for absence.  Moved Lynn Cadenhead, seconded Eleanor West  <b>CARRIED</b>	5:02pm
2.	<b>Conflicts of Interest</b> No conflicts were declared.	5:03pm
3.	<b>Update from Councillor Paul</b> Councillor Paul discussed the Long-Term Plan, Spatial Plan, Regional Growth Framework, and regional emissions reduction plan.  Councillor Foon discussed the Procurement Strategy which passed last week and is aligned with four well-beings.  Members discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What councillors' views/intentions were around the airport requirement for designation.</li><li>• When the Draft Spatial Plan feedback summary would be released.</li></ul>	5:04pm

<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Sewerage Sludge Proposal</b></p> <p>Mike Mendonça discussed the preferred option for the Wellington Sludge Minimisation Project and its benefits and risks.</p> <p>Despite population growth, volumes of waste to landfill have been stable, whereas the amount of sludge has increased. Currently, there is only just enough waste to continue mixing with waste with sludge at the 4:1 ration required. A solution must be found for the city to meet its climate change and waste minimisation goals. The proposal looked at 16 different options at two different locations, with the top five preferred options being based at Moa Point. This will be subject to public consultation and Councillor decisions.</p> <p>Members discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the two-part process works – it would kill pathogens and vectors; and turn the product into benign ash. The volume going to landfill would be reduced from the equivalent of 4-7 skip bins to the equivalent of a small trailer load per day.</li> <li>• How robust the proposal process was and whether this is the best option.</li> <li>• How widely used the system is in New Zealand and internationally.</li> <li>• The certainty of the land and availability of other options.</li> <li>• That this would lead to an emissions reduction because it would enable the reduction of waste, not because the sewerage itself produces much methane.</li> <li>• That the risk of increased emissions through electricity use is dwarfed by the likelihood of cost of a landfill extension and that the pumps’ electricity use is included in the overall analysis.</li> <li>• That waste minimisation will be impossible without solving the sludge issue.</li> <li>• That the funding is not proposed to come from the draft Long-Term Plan, rather will be trying to secure crown funding for this.</li> <li>• That the landfill will still be needed during and after construction of the plant, and that landfill fees pay for services like kerbside recycling.</li> <li>• That public consultation will be taking place in July 2021.</li> </ul>	<p><b>5:10pm</b></p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Three Waters Reform</b></p> <p>Mike Mendonça discussed the Mayoral Taskforce on the Three Waters Report, and the range of issues that are happening across the country’s water networks. The Department of Internal Affairs is leading this work and will be consulting the public in April. Mike discussed the 1996 Scottish water reforms, the need for household water consumption to decrease, and the potentially challenge to smaller local governments whose main remit might be water.</p> <p>Members discussed:</p>	<p><b>5:28pm</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether the government will look at changes to stormwater, and that WCC will advocate for it to be included.</li> <li>• Whether officers are aware of an anti-water metering lobby group, that people find it difficult to see water metering without volumetric charging, and the role of council to ensure that people have the right information and aren't spreading mis/disinformation.</li> <li>• Whether metering by suburb or by street rather than by household is a possibility, and that there are some zoned meters in Ngaio and Khandallah. Zoned meters are not helpful in pinpointing leaks on privately owned pipes.</li> <li>• That water meters can be smart meters rather than read by meter readers.</li> <li>• That from a resilience perspective the risk of seismic events are a matter of when, not if.</li> <li>• Whether WCC has a stance on private tanks and that there is a Whaitua Committee briefing on 16 February 2021, where water retention will be discussed in relation to the Draft District Plan.</li> </ul>	
6.	<p><b>Notice of Requirement for Airport Expansion</b></p> <p>Chris discussed his individual submission on the Wellington Airport requirement for designation, and asked group members if ERG would like to submit along the same lines. The submission period ends on 26 February 2021.</p> <p>Chris to put together submission and circulate for feedback.</p>	5:56pm
7.	<p><b>Portfolio Updates</b></p> <p>Members discussed:</p> <p><b>Water:</b> Arron had discussion with Michelle and they are keen to see how ERG can have an influence on the three waters reform and on the Council adopting the mayoral taskforce recommendations, and incorporating better water sensitive urban design.</p> <p><b>Heritage:</b> Lynn discussed the LTP budget and that the big tickets items include building like the St James Theatre and the Central Library.</p> <p><b>Urban Design:</b> Waiting on the release of the Draft Spatial Plan consultation summary. The traffic resolution for Garrett Street and Swan Lane Upgrade passed, and temporary pop up parks in Allen, Riddiford and Marion Streets have been set up.</p> <p><b>Transport:</b> LGWM had been in the news lately, and the Regional Land Transport Plan is open for consultation until 19 March.</p>	6:08pm

8.	<p><b>General Business</b></p> <p>Lynn discussed Portfolio Principals, members to have a final review and Lynn to collate into one document that could be shared with Council staff.</p> <p>Hedi discussed the proposed work plan, group members gave feedback and suggestions. Hedi to work with Moana on a revised draft workplan for the next ERG meeting.</p>	6:12pm
9.	<p><b>Previous Minutes Confirmation – 14 December 2020</b></p> <p>The previous minutes were confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Moved Arron Cox, seconded Eleanor West</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>CARRIED</b></p>	6:17pm
10.	<p><b>Advisory Group Review</b></p> <p>Lynn spoke to the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting of 10 December 2020, at which the Advisory Group Review was discussed.</p> <p>Group members discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2021 being a busy year and taking care of one’s self.</li> <li>• Better to do short submissions than longer ones if consensus among group members can’t be reached.</li> </ul>	6:32pm
11.	<p><b>Next meeting</b></p> <p>Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Chaired by Steven.</p>	6:53pm

**Actions:** The following tables the actions, responsibilities and deadlines from previous meetings

Action Points	Responsibility	Deadline
1.		
2.		

General Business	
1.	

Portfolio Groups	ERG Lead		Council Officer
Transport	Michelle Rush		Joe Hewitt, Team Lead Transport Strategy and Siobhan Procter, Manager Transport and Infrastructure
Climate Change	Chris Watson	Isla Day, Steven Almond	Alison Howard, Climate Change Response Manager

Waste	Steven Almond	Clare Stringer	Emily Taylor-Hall, Waste Operations Manager
Water	Arron Cox		Zac Jordan, Principal Advisor Resilience Infrastructure
Resilience	Lynn Cadenhead		Mike Mendonca, Chief Resilience Officer
Urban Design Agency/Urban Growth	Eleanor West	Sally Faisandier	Vida Christeller, Manager City Design & Place Planning; Phil Becker, Manager Build Wellington
Mana whenua iwi & Treaty Relations			Nicky Karu, Manager Tira Poutama-Iwi Partnership
Biodiversity/Open Space	Mike Britton	Clare Stringer	Daniela Biaggio, Urban Ecology Manager
Heritage	Lynn Cadenhead	Clare Stringer	Mark Lindsay, Heritage Manager